

# HI33Y-30 The Historical Film: Global Perspectives in the Age of Netflix

**24/25**

**Department**

History

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 3

**Module leader**

J.E. Smyth

**Credit value**

30

**Module duration**

22 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

This year-long survey of the historical film analyses the development and dominance of feature historical filmmaking from the silent era to the age of Netflix. Although weekly topics and individual key films may change from year to year, the module will explore the Hollywood tradition alongside the work of filmmakers from Europe, Asia, and the Global South.

[Module web page](#)

### Module aims

Readings, lectures, and seminar discussions will consider issues in historiography, documentary, television series, and gaming alternatives; screenwriting and editing; ideology and genre; censorship; race, gender, class, and sexuality; exhibition and reception. Course readings will be divided among traditional and revisionist historiography, memoirs and historical literature later adapted for the screen, screenplays, recent critical assessments of 'filmed history', and archival material. Past topics include women's history on screen, representations of wartime collaboration and resistance to fascism, the biopic, Russian cinema from Eisenstein to Sokurov, the British Empire film genre, the transnational western, the 'Rashomon' effect, and postmodernism.

## Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

### Term 1

1. The Age of Netflix
2. Film & History: Beyond 'Separate But Equal'
3. D.W. Griffith and the Origins of Film Censorship
4. Global Hollywood
5. Soviet Montage
6. Russian Ark
7. The Gender of Film History
8. Working-Class Biopics
9. Film Noir and Brit Noir

### Term 2

11. The Western
12. Global West: Karl May and Sergio Leone
13. Empire as a Way of Life: Britain in the 1930s
14. Postcolonial Critique and 'Lawrence of Arabia'
15. The 'Rashomon' Effect
17. Remembering the 'Good War'
18. Resistance, Collaboration, and Conformists
19. Documenting the Holocaust
20. Nostalgia and Postmodernism

### Term 3

21. The Streaming Giants and the End of Film
22. Review Session

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a systematic knowledge and understanding of the origins and development of the historical film in Hollywood and other 'national' traditions in Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, China, and Russia
- Critically analyse and evaluate classic and ongoing debates within the humanities about the representation and construction of history on screen
- Effectively communicate ideas, and make informed, coherent and persuasive arguments, relating to the content and form of history and biography in film, literature, and historiography and the reasons for shifts in discursive emphasis over time
- Critically review and consolidate theoretical, methodological, and historiographical ideas relating to the historical film

## Indicative reading list

- Becker, Carl (1935). *Everyman His Own Historian*. New York: F. S. Crofts & Co.
- Bordwell, David et al. (1985). *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Caton, Steven (1999). *Lawrence of Arabia: A Cultural Anthropology*.
- Clark, Suzanne (2003). *Cold Warriors*. University of Southern Illinois Press.
- Des Jardins, Julie (2003). *Women and the Historical Profession in America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Dika, Vera (2003). *Recycled Culture in Contemporary Art & Film*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Elsaesser, Thomas (1996). *Fassbinder's Germany: History Identity Subject*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Ferro, Marc (1988). *Cinema and History*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Grindon, Leger (1994). *Shadows on the Past: Studies in the Historical Fiction Film*. Temple University Press.
- Gunning, Tom (1998). *D.W. Griffith and the Origins of American Narrative Filmmaking*.
- Jameson, Fredric (1990). *Signatures of the Visible*. London: Routledge.
- Novick, Peter (1988). *That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pollock, Griselda and M. Silverman (2011). *Concentrationary Cinema*. Berghahn.
- Ramirez, Bruno (2014). *Inside the Historical Film*. McGill-Queen's Press.
- Richards, Jeffrey (1997). *Films and British National Identity*. Manchester University Press.
- Rosenstone, Robert A. (1995). *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Sklar, Robert and Charles Musser, eds (1997). *Resistant Images*. Temple University Press.
- Smyth, J. E. (2012). *Hollywood and the American Historical Film*. Macmillan.
- Tashiro, Charles (1994). *Pretty Pictures*. University of Texas Press.
- Taylor, Richard (1998). *The Eisenstein Reader*. BFI.
- Vincendeau, Ginette (2003). *Jean-Pierre Melville: An American In Paris*. London: BFI.

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

## Subject specific skills

See learning outcomes.

## Transferable skills

See learning outcomes.

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## Study

## Study time

<b>Type</b>	<b>Required</b>
Seminars	18 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Tutorials	4 sessions of 1 hour (1%)
Private study	260 hours (87%)
Total	300 hours

## **Private study description**

History modules require students to undertake extensive independent research and reading to prepare for seminars and assessments. As a rough guide, students will be expected to read and prepare to comment on three substantial texts (articles or book chapters) for each seminar taking approximately 3 hours. Each assessment requires independent research, reading around 6-10 texts and writing and presenting the outcomes of this preparation in an essay, review, presentation or other related task.

## **Costs**

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## **Assessment**

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

### **Assessment group A1**

	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Study time</b>
Seminar contribution	10%	
1500 word essay	10%	
3000 word essay	40%	
7 day take-home essay with citations and a bibliography	40%	

### **Feedback on assessment**

Written feedback provided via Tabula; optional oral feedback in office hours.

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## **Availability**

### **Courses**

This module is Optional for:

- Year 3 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History
- Year 4 of UHIA-VQ33 Undergraduate English and History (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of UFRA-R1VA Undergraduate French and History
- Year 4 of UGEA-R2V1 Undergraduate German and History
- Year 4 of ULNA-R4V1 Undergraduate Hispanic Studies and History
- UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
  - Year 3 of V100 History
  - Year 3 of V100 History
- UPDA-Y306 Undergraduate History (Part-Time)
  - Year 3 of Y306 History (Part Time)
  - Year 3 of Y306 History (Part Time)
- Year 3 of UHIA-V102 Undergraduate History (Renaissance and Modern History Stream)
- Year 4 of UHIA-V103 Undergraduate History (Renaissance and Modern History Stream) (with Year Abroad)
- Year 4 of UHIA-V101 Undergraduate History (with Year Abroad)
- Year 3 of UIPA-V1L8 Undergraduate History and Global Sustainable Development
- Year 4 of UITA-R3V2 Undergraduate History and Italian
- Year 3 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- Year 4 of UHIA-V1V8 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 4 of UHIA-V1V6 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad)
- Year 3 of UHIA-V1V7 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with a term in Venice)
- UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
  - Year 3 of VM11 History and Politics
  - Year 3 of VM11 History and Politics
  - Year 3 of VM11 History and Politics
- Year 4 of UHIA-VM14 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 4 of UHIA-VM12 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VM13 Undergraduate History and Politics (with a term in Venice)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology
- Year 4 of UHIA-VL16 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 4 of UHIA-VL14 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with Year Abroad)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VL15 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with a term in Venice)
- UVCA-LA99 Undergraduate Liberal Arts
  - Year 3 of LA99 Liberal Arts
  - Year 3 of LA92 Liberal Arts with Classics
  - Year 3 of LA73 Liberal Arts with Design Studies
  - Year 3 of LA83 Liberal Arts with Economics
  - Year 3 of LA82 Liberal Arts with Education
  - Year 3 of LA95 Liberal Arts with English
  - Year 3 of LA81 Liberal Arts with Film and Television Studies
  - Year 3 of LA80 Liberal Arts with Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 3 of LA93 Liberal Arts with Global Sustainable Development
  - Year 3 of LA97 Liberal Arts with History

- Year 3 of LA91 Liberal Arts with Life Sciences
- Year 3 of LA75 Liberal Arts with Modern Languages and Cultures
- Year 3 of LA96 Liberal Arts with Philosophy
- Year 3 of LA94 Liberal Arts with Theatre and Performance Studies